

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9210

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY BANJUL

AMEMBASSY PRAIA

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 804

STATE PASS COPY TO AID

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EA

SUBJ: SAHEL TRADE UNION MEETING

REF: STATE 58282 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVES OF TRADE UNIONS FROM 5 SAHEL COUNTRIES CONCLUDED THREE DAY MEETING BY ESTABLISHING PERMANENT SAHEL TRADE UNION COMMITTEE AND ISSUING URGENT APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL AND WESTERN TRADE UNION GROUPS TO CONTRIBUTE NEEDED FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO HELP UNIONS ASSIST IN COMBATING THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT. END SUMMARY

2. REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS OF SENEGAL, MAURITANIAN, NIGER AND MALI AND DELEGATES FROM EACH OF FOUR UPPER VOLTAN TRADE UNIONS MET IN NOUAKCHOTT MARCH 20-22 TO DISCUSS WAYS THE UNIONS COULD ASSIST THEIR COUNTRIES TO
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HELP RELIEVE SUFFERING CAUSED BY THE DROUGHT. PAT O'FARRELL AND DAVE BROMBART OF AFRICAN/AMERICAN LABOR CENTER (AALC) ATTENDED CONFERENCE AND UNDP RES REP AND US EMBASSY CHARGE INVITED TO OPENING AND CLOSING SESSIONS. EXPECTED CHADIAN REPRESENTATIVES DID NOT ARRIVE IN NOUAKCHOTT. FLAGS OF SAHEL COUNTRIES, US AND UN PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED OUTSIDE MAURITANIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING WHICH WAS CONFERENCE SITE.

3. OPENING SESSION OF CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTED BY WELCOMING COMMENTS BY MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT SIDI OULD SCHIKH ABDALLAH, CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN CHEIKH MELAININE ROBERT (UTM SECGEN), ND 10 MINUTE SPEECH BY AALC REP BROMBART. BROMBART SPEECH STRESSED AFL/CIO SUPORT OF SAHEL TRADE UNIONS, CITED IMPORTANCE US GRAIN ONTRIBUTIONS TO ALL SAHELIAN COUNTRIES IN HELPING THEM COMBAT HUNGER CAUSED BY DROUGHT, AND REFERRED TO CONTINUING AFL/CIO CONERNCS OVER ILO ACTIONS WHICH PROMPTED US WITHDRAWAL FROM ILO. CONFERENCE WORKING SESSIONS DEVOTED TO EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AS TO HOW UNIONS COULD HELP THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO ORGANIZE DROUGHT RELIEF ACTIVITIES -- SUCH AS ASSISTANCE IN DISTRIBUTING EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES. CONFERENCE CONCLUDED WITH CREATION OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF SAHELIAN TRADE UNIONS AND ELECTED FOLLOWING OFFICERS: PRESIDENT - MALI; VICE PRESIDENT - MAURITANIA; PERMANENT SECRETARY - SENEGAL; COORDINATOR - NIGER; TREASURER - SENEGAL; FIRST AND SECOND "COMMISSAIRE AUX COMPTES" - UPPER VOLTAS AND GAMBIA RESPECTIVELY. PERMANENT COMMITTEE OFFICE WILL BE LOCATED IN DAKAR, ALTHOUGH UPPER VOLTAN DELEGATES PREFERRED OUAGADOUGOU AND ONLY RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO SELECTION OF DAKAR. CONFERENCE ISSUED URGENT APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS, THE U, THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LABOR CENTER, THE FRIEDRICH EBERT, KONRAD ADENAUER, AND FREDERICH NEUMAN FOUNDATIONS, THE GROUP SOS-SAHEL, CLUB DES AMIS DE SAHEL, AND ALL INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE URGENTLY UNCLASSIFIED

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NEEDED FOOD AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES.

4. MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED DAILY NEWSPAPER CHAAB GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF CONFERENCE BEGINNING WITH LONG ARTICLES IN MARCH 16/17 ISSUES THROUGH HALF PAGE ARTICLE ONE CLOSING SESSION OF CONFERENCE IN MARCH 23 ISSUE. CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN CHEIKH ROBERT, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF VIRTUALLY ALL SAHEL UNIONS FREQUENTLY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY PRAISED THE AALC AND ITS ACTIVITIES, WITH PARTICULAR THANKS TO AALC FOR FUNDING THIS CONFERENCE. CHAAB ARTICLES MADE FREQUENT REFERENCE TO AALC SUPPORT OF MAURITANIAN (UTM) AND OTHER SAHEL UNIONS' ACTIVITIES AND HAD FEATURE STORY ON AALC'S MARCH 22 DONATION OF LANDROVER TO UTM WORKERS EDUCATION CENTER. AALC REPS O'FARRELL AND BROMBART TOLD ME THAT THEY BELIEVED CONFERENCE HAD BEEN PRODUCTIVE AND HOPED ENTHUSIASTIC EXCHANGE OF IDEAS WOULD ASSIST UNIONS IN ORGANIZING, PARTICULARLY THEIR EFFORTS TO COMBAT EFFECTS OF DROUGHT. AALC MADE NO COMMITMENT TO EXPAND ITS SAHEL PROGRAMS, BUT STATED IT WOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ALL WORTHWHILE PROPOSALS.

5. COPIES OF CONFERENCE DECLARATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND PAPERS ORGANIZING PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF SAHEL TRADE UNIONS POACHED TO

ADDRESSE AND INFO POSTS.

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